



# *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

*Executive Office of Health and Human Services*

## **Department of Youth Services**

### **Official Policy**

**Policy Name:** DYS Gift Card Use for Youth and Families

**Policy #:** 01.02.26 **Effective Date:** Sept. 14, 2018

**Repeals:** None

**References:** DYS Gift Card Request Form

**Signature:**  August 23, 2018  
Peter J. Forbes, Commissioner

**Applicability:** This policy shall apply to DYS directly. Providers are expected to have their own policy covering this topic area.

### **Policy**

It is the policy of the Department of Youth Services (DYS) that DYS Caseworkers and other authorized DYS state and contracted provider employees may request gift cards for DYS youth and their families to pay for clothing, groceries or other items consistent with the DYS mission. These procedures outlined in this policy are designed to maximize employee opportunities for use of gift cards while ensuring appropriate management of the purchase, distribution, and accounting of gift cards to prevent loss, misuse, and fraud.

Such authorized employees shall only use gift cards that are funded through the regional Community Service Network (CSN) contracts for DYS youth in residential or community placements.

Failure to comply with this policy and procedures may result in disciplinary proceedings for violations of state, DYS policy and contract requirements including, but not limited to, improper use of state property and fraud, waste or abuse violations.

### **Procedure**

#### **A. Definitions**

1. The following definitions shall have the meanings assigned to them in this policy for purposes of interpreting this policy.

Authorized employees: DYS Caseworkers, District Managers, Director of Community Operations, CSN provider employees including Youth Service Coordinators (YSC) or any other employee as designated by the Regional Directors allowed to request and use gift cards for DYS youth and their families.

Community Services Network (CSN) Provider: Regional contracted providers who are authorized to buy and distribute gift cards to DYS District Offices and authorized employees and use gift cards under this policy.

Community Services Network District Office Expenditure Log: Log maintained by the CSN Provider detailing the purchase, distribution and use of gift cards.

Gift Card: Store/creditor prepaid card allowing the holder to purchase items.

2. Terms that are defined Policy #01.01.04, "Policy Definitions" shall have the meanings assigned to them in that policy, unless a contrary meaning is intended.
3. Terms not defined in Policy #01.01.04 or in this policy shall have the meanings assigned to them by reasonably accepted standard dictionary definitions of American English.

**B. DYS Gift Card Use Purposes**

1. Authorized Employee Using Gift Card with Youth for Specific Purchases
  - a. Authorized employees may use a gift card for a youth to purchase specific items needed by the youth, i.e., tie for an interview, as a reward/ gift for an accomplishment. Youth may, but are not required to be present at time the card is used.
  - b. The gift card shall be used and returned with receipt within five (5) days of the date the employee received the card. The receipt shall detail the item purchased and specify whether there is any remaining value on the Card.
2. Gift Card to Youth/Family for Specific Purchase
  - a. Authorized employees may request gift cards for a youth and/or youth's family to facilitate the purchase of groceries or needs for special occasions.
  - b. Youth, and parent/legal guardian, if applicable, shall sign off on the request form that they received the gift card and affirm that the card will be used for the purpose described in the request form.
  - c. A gift card issued to a youth or youth's family subject to this section may be used over a period of time and does not need to be returned.
3. Youth Recognition

- a. Authorized employees may use gift cards for youth recognition, i.e., to acknowledge youth achievement of one of their goals, or to acknowledge youth had a good week at school.
- b. Gift cards for recognition shall not exceed \$25 without approval of a manager.
- c. Youth shall acknowledge receipt of the gift card and affirm that they will use it for the intended purpose on the request form.
- d. A gift card for youth recognition may be used by the youth over a period of time and does not need to be returned.

C. Gift Card Use Process Requirements

1. When seeking a Gift Card consistent with the purposes detailed above, authorized employees shall complete a DYS Gift Card Request Form and submit to the CSN Provider or designee. No gift card shall be distributed without a completed Request Form that includes the following information:
  - a. Type of gift card;
  - b. Identification number listed on the card;
  - c. Reason for request for a gift card;
  - d. Amount requested;
  - e. Name of youth and/or family the card is being requested for;
  - f. Program or placement location of the youth; and
  - g. Employee's name and signature requesting the gift card.
2. Upon determination by the CSN that the request meets the purpose areas described herein, the CSN shall authorize distribution of the gift card, subject to the completion of the following additional information on the Request Form:
  - a. Name and signature of employee receiving card;
  - b. Name and signature of youth and/or parent or legal guardian, if for family use, receiving the card;
  - c. Type of card;
  - d. Identification number listed on card;
  - e. Value of gift card;
  - f. Date card was signed out or received;
  - g. The signature of a second employee confirming that named employee has received the gift card and the number/denomination is accurate.
3. Where required, the receipt and any other documentation documenting that the gift card was used shall be attached to the Request form, along with a description of what it was used for, what if any balance is remaining.
4. Where required, the Request Form shall also include the signature of the person returning the Gift Card and date that gift card was returned.

5. The CSN Provider CFO or designee shall purchase and monitor all gift card transactions in compliance with this policy maintaining a record of these transactions on a CSN District Office Gift Card Expenditure Log that includes:
  - a. An inventory log of all gift cards with corresponding gift card numbers;
  - b. Value of each gift card;
  - c. Issuer of gift card;
  - d. Date gift card purchased;
  - e. Name of the employee who received the gift card; and
  - f. the date the gift card was returned with balance, where required.
6. Regional DYS state and provider fiscal units shall perform audits of the gift card process quarterly and provide the DYS CFO a copy of the detailed Gift Card Expenditure Logs detailed above each quarter.
7. Gift cards and documents regarding gift cards shall be kept in a locked and secure location at the Regional Office and accessed only by authorized personnel.